

West Lochaber Deer Management Group

WEST LOCHABER DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP AGM

Friday 2nd December 2016
10.30 – 13.00hrs
Glenfinnan House Hotel, Glenfinnan

Minute

Attendees:

Alistair Gibson – (DMG Chairman) (ADMG rep),
 Glenfinnan
 Kate Tuer, Scottish Woodlands/Fassfern
 James Coulston - Arisaig
 Ian Leith and Jane Mitchell – Glenfinnan
 Paul Dorian– Glenfinnan
 Mrs Sandra De Ferranti, Meoble
 Alan Currie – Fassfern/Achdaluie
 Mike Rhoden - Fassfern/Achdaluie
 Paolo Barardelli - Glen Mamie
 Lynda Campbell, ADMG
 Graham Nairn – Annat/Achanellan/Glen Fada
 John Morrison - Achnacarry Sporting
 Alex MacDonald - Achnacarry south
 Simon Laird - Achnacarry Sporting
 Raymond Fraser – Meoble
 John Jackson -FES
 Graeme Taylor - SNH
 Inspector D. Campbell – Police Service of Scotland
 PC Hugo Martin – Wildlife Crime Officer, Police
 Service of Scotland
 Gary Servant – ACF
 Steve Morris – Woodland Trust/Glen Maillie/Arkaig

Apologies:

Bruce Taylor – (DMG Secretary & Treasurer), Fassfern
 Robert Spence - Scamadale
 John MacDonald – Scamadale
 Hugh MacLaren - Ranachan
 Pete MacLaren – Ranachan
 Niall Rowantree – Ardnish
 Peter Stewart-Sandeman – Ardnish
 Iain Collier – Forestry Commission
 Mark Ferranti - Meoble
 John Tulloch - Fassfern/Achdaluie,
 Cathy Mayne, SNH
 Colin Lavin - FES
 Colin McClean – Deer Consultancy Services
 Laura Taylor – Deer Consultancy Services

No.	Summary	Action
1	<p>Apologies and Introductions</p> <p>As recorded above.</p>	
2	<p>Election of Chairman and Office Bearers, and any co-options</p> <p>An invitation for office bearers was made but, in the absence of volunteers, the committee remains as follows:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Alistair Gibson : Chairman Bruce Taylor : Secretary/Treasurer</p>	

3	<p>Wildlife Crime and Poaching</p> <p>Welcome to new Wildlife Crime Liaison Officer, PC Hugo Martin. PC Martin is based at Mallaig and is now the primary contact for any reports. Phone the station directly on 01397 709301, or PC Martin directly (number to follow). If there is no one available at the time of report, use the 101 service.</p> <p>Reports of poaching and other suspicious incidents will now be co-ordinated between stations to improve response.</p> <p>Police recording of incidents has changed, and now also includes road traffic accidents involving deer – this is likely to be under-recorded.</p> <p>13 wildlife crime incidents were reported in the last year – 3 of these were about deer.</p> <p>There was one major incident on 2nd November from which good forensic evidence was recovered following hard work of those involved on the day especially Graham Nairn. Inspector Campbell was hopeful of a successful case and is taking a personal interest in progress of evidence.</p> <p>Poacher patrol between estates started in November. No known suspicious registrations to report at this date.</p>	
4	<p>Minutes of the last AGM and any Matters Arising</p> <p>Mr P.Barradelli noted that he was present at 6th May meeting though recorded as absent. Minute to be corrected.</p> <p>Minutes proposed for acceptance by Ian Leith , seconded by</p>	
5	<p>Membership and Subscriptions, Email contact details</p> <p>A form was circulated around the attendance to update membership details.</p>	
6	<p>Members Reports.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) 2016 Culls ii) Condition Report iii) Proposed Hind and Stag Cull for 2017 <p>2016 Cull, condition report and proposed hind and stag cull for 2016/17 are recorded in table below:</p>	

ESTATE	Total Stags	Average Weight	Average Age	Total Hind	Target Hind Cull	Comments
Glenfinnan	26	89kg	8	12	35-40	Fair condition, 3 stags > 100kg as per last year. A pattern of lower weights
Ranachan	4	79kg	9		10	
FES Glen Loy and Loch Arkaig	21 Red and Sika			10 plus 4 calf		Very good condition. 5 roe buck, 2 roe does, 2 roe kids also shot in period.
Fassfern Achdaliu	38	86kg	8.8		60	Hinds showing poorer condition earlier in season than normal. Lower stag weights by 1 stone on average than 2015.
Fassfern Forestry	31 (19 out of season)			23	No target	
Glen Mamie	16				12-15	Shot over 8 days. Very good condition. Younger stags this year.
Achnacarry	45 Red 1 Sika	88kg	10.6	32	60	178kg biggest but lower than usual, a pattern over last 5 years. Very good condition. Token feeding only.
Meoble	35	89kg	8	18	30 inc. calves	Very good condition. Good weather, good season.
Scamadale	5	65.2kg	6.4	8 + 2 calves		Good condition.
Arisaig	17			1		Lighter than usual, but good condition. A number of old/poor stags shot.
ACF	10 (target)				25	New member. Nothing shot to date. Porous fencing on block to be addressed.

<p>7</p>	<p>Count organisation for 2016</p> <p>The count is essential to the accuracy of the management outcomes of the DMP. Currently SNH require the population model to be updated to which the count data is essential. The 2016 count was organised by Alistair Gibson with the objective of counting all estates within as short a time as possible, if not simultaneously. Glenfinnan, Achdaliu and Fassfern were co-ordinated and counted together. Ardnish was also counted by Alistair who had spare men for a day – but a lack of prior notice to the estate was an issue. Ardnish is a new member of the DMG and will be represented by N.Rowantree. Meoble counted in mid-May by helicopter, and will count every second year by same method. The count was felt to be reasonably accurate given the good weather conditions and co-ordinated approach but that a closer set of dates would increase accuracy across the DMP area.</p> <p>Count Organisation for 2017:</p> <p>Alistair Gibson agreed to act as main co-ordinator. It was agreed that a date post-February 15th is most use to members and accuracy. It was proposed that the East count could be carried out in 1 day, with the West areas being counted on the second day with assistance. Meoble confirmed they would aim for Mid-March count by helicopter.</p> <p>No helicopter count assistance available form SNH for 2017.</p>	
<p>8</p>	<p>Venison Markets</p> <p>Glenfinnan – Simpson Game £2.20/kg as last year All others reported same contracts and prices as last year.</p> <p>FES – Highland game, with negotiated contract per 6 months. Grading has been very picky post E. coli scare with 1% carcass rejection. Rejections have recently focussed on 'bone taint' an odour resulting from the cooling process of carcass, which occurs most frequently in larger beasts, especially if left out overnight.</p> <p>SNH – no change to best practise yet but under review by SNH/Food Standards/FC. Best Practise YouTube videos are available.</p>	
<p>9</p>	<p>ADMG - Report and Discussion</p> <p>Provided by Lynda Campbell. ADMG recently responded to the SNH report to the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee report regarding the consideration of giving new powers to SNH to manage Scotland's deer population rather than continuing with the voluntary deer management sector.</p> <p>DMG Members should be aware of and adhere to the DMP objectives.</p>	<p>ALL</p>

	<p>Rating notice forms are now being received across the country. Careful consideration and liaison with neighbours will be required to reflect costs accurately. Not all rating notices have been issued yet. It is possible to send a holding letter re ratings before sending in return required within 14 days.</p> <p>The website is up for renewal – any changes please comment. Secretary/treasurer to renew subscription.</p>	Sec/T
10	<p>SNH - Report and Discussion with focus on SNH/ADMG assessment of current performance against both the ADMG Benchmark and delivery of public objectives. Provided by Graeme Taylor.</p> <p>Surveys: SNH advised that the Native Woodland survey was a priority for the DMP, then blanket bog, then dwarf shrub surveys. DMP management might need to be revised following the results of the surveys. Incentive schemes for e.g. reducing grazing pressure, will be available. The survey would be based on randomly selected plot locations provided to DMG by SNH. These are computer generated to avoid bias.</p> <p>Report: SNH’s efforts under section 7 had not delivered desired results. Population monitoring across the country shows a general rise in deer numbers, which is expected to plateau and then decline.</p> <p>Delivery of designated sites/SSSIs to favourable condition has been patchy. Lowland Deer Network has made slower progress against targets than DMGs. Scottish Biodiversity Strategy targets include 10,000Ha of new woodland and this is not being delivered yet. There are other factors than deer management but pressure will continue on DMGs as this target is the Scottish Government’s priority.</p> <p>Graeme advised that the DMG keep to the DMP and deliver objectives on time, to avoid further pressure to achieve targets.</p>	
11	<p>Deer Management Plan Provided by Alistair Gibson. Laura Taylor supplied a Habitat Survey Summary as per DMP requirements. This included monitoring of Blanket Bog, Dwarf Shrub and Native Woodland areas. Survey method has been discussed with SNH and is to be confirmed. Initial survey work to focus on Native Woodland in 2017, with a follow up survey on this vegetation type in 3 year plus intervals, dependant on initial results. Quote from Laura Taylor received and initial surveys scheduled for late spring/May (once vegetation has flushed). Cost per Estate requested.</p> <p>Several surveys have already been carried out e.g. NWSS (2007-2011), but this data may not be relevant due to age. Sheep browsing in some areas is difficult to determine from deer browsing but it is hoped that Estates will liaise with the surveyors to ensure they are aware of local issues that might affect results. The survey period is 3 years initially, but can increase to 10 year intervals, especially for woodland areas. The surveys are part of the DMP, and as the DMP has been agreed by all parties it is assumed that they have also agreed to the survey requirement.</p>	Sec/T

	<p>14 action points in DMP for 2016 – some in process, some delivered. There are several action points for 2017. These will be circulated</p> <p>Action > Everyone should read the DMP!</p> <p>Public engagement undertaken by DMG included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Andrews University field trip • Glenfinnan CC meetings/walks • Village engagement • Wild in the West • Duke of Edinburgh group talks on deer/venison/wild food. • UHI and Lochaber schools engagement planned for 2017. • Witness for J.Kennedy firearms revoke case. 	<p>Sec/T</p> <p>ALL</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>Constitution & Administration</p> <p>The DMG now have a bank account. Current account has a low balance – a request for funds for Habitat Monitoring will be sent out. Treasurers report was distributed. SNH funded £5000 of the DMP costs in 2016. Query over costs allocated for secretarial/treasurer. Basis of costs confirmed as honorarium of £3000.</p> <p>A revised email contact list has been collated and will be used for future communications by DMG. Subscriptions are invoiced out shortly after AGM.</p> <p>Woodland Trust to be contacted for details of membership.</p>	<p>Sec/T</p> <p>Sec/T</p> <p>Sec/T</p>
<p>13</p>	<p>Any other business</p> <p><u>Rates:</u> Rate Assessments – Meoble, Fassfern, Glenfinnan and Achnacarry expressed willingness to work together for accuracy of returns, other may be interested in same. Factor liaison to be organised by email. No rate notices received by any member of group so far.</p> <p><u>Wild Boar:</u> Those who had boar on their area all committed to eradicating all population. Sightings at Glen Alladale are unusual. Knoydart and Loch Morar sightings and cull (14 in 2 years), Fassfern had 3 this year. Glenfinnan has no sightings yet. More boar have been seen since the harvesting activity at Glen Dessary. No restrictions on shooting boar, no licence required. Trapping trials underway with FC/SNH – contact John Jackson for more info.</p> <p><u>Consultancy:</u> Gary Servant (ACF) offered free advice on Native Woodland Survey issues</p>	<p>Sec/T</p>
<p>14</p>	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>Post count meeting in April/May. Date to be advised. AGM - First Friday of December.(= 1st December 2017)</p>	